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What Happened Thursday

Anstasia Cerankosky

MFA Imaging Arts/ Computer Animation
SCHOOL OF FILM AND ANIMATION
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
September 2004

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Anastasia Cerankosky
Graduate Thesis Paper
RIT School of Film and Animation

"On any Thursday, a lonely little girl gets herself dressed and a transsexual seeks guidance while a husband's eyes stray. An unlikely conception occurs. A doctor can't cure his wife. Who and what are normal? Does "normal" equal "happy"? Here is a glimpse at the poetry and tragedy of everyday life."

My original approved thesis was to be a documentary about a boxing program called "Luta Pela Paz" in Rio de Janeiro aimed at keeping young men from the violent drug trade. Four days before I left from Rochester to Rio, the British man in charge of the program (whom I had flown to New York to meet and discuss the project), called me and told me I couldn't possibly film the school because two journalists from GQ magazine had been there and were shot at. Devastated, I conceded. I didn't want to be shot at. Especially two months pregnant.

Up for resubmission in the fall, I found myself absolutely unable to decide on a script or documentary project. Having spent my second year concentrating on documentary and experimental film, I felt that a fiction piece would be best for my thesis. Many short student films seem to fail because their plot ambitions far outweigh their production level. In my observation at

SOFA, many students couldn't seem to fit fiction into short form, so instead crammed feature-length plots into twenty-minutes. It was as though the short form hadn't been thoroughly explored by these live-action students, either individually or within the curriculum to the extent that the animation necessitates its students to. I wanted to produce a film that worked well as a short and could possibly go on to festivals, and so I began to watch shorts that had been in festivals. Two categories of short filmed were overwhelmingly successful: funny shorts and the "clever surprise ending" short. If a funny short had a good punch line and was under fifteen minutes, it worked. A "surprise ending" could get away with being longer, if it was suspenseful enough and if the production value was high. There weren't many well-done pieces about relationships or everyday life without an "ah-ha" moment that was really clever and usually humorous. That was discouraging in a way, because most of the fiction I felt inspired to write revolved around everyday life, relationships and the tiny tragic drama within that. The more I struggled to piece together a clever short with a big "ah-ha-I-get-it-how-very-clever" moment, the more hopeless I got. It wasn't fitting was I was feeling at that time. With an ever-growing young life inside of me, I

was reflective and inspired by everyday life, everyday tragedy, and the poetic moments we remember.

"What Happened Thursday" held the working title of "11, 12, 13..." because the script was structured around eleven characters over the course of twelve hours captured in thirteen short scenes. The construct of the hours of the day gives the story a natural and subtle curve, a path to follow, and also provides some guidance as to the settings for the "moments." These moments were chosen because they each represent a human emotion manifested in a conversation or interaction. For example the little girl dressing herself because her depressed mother won't get out of bed is meant to evoke "independence." I strived to represent common human conditions in uncommon ways, such as the "desperation" of a young man forcing himself to donate sperm for money. These situations were intended to demonstrate the universality of emotion within our society, within which there exist a wide variety of experiences. When I started the script, there were certain stories that had to be included and specific characters that I really wanted to show. The little girl with the depressed Mother was very important, because she represents growth without guidance. Although she worries about her mother, she flourishes: she dresses herself, feeds herself, she

whistles. The old man is important, as well, for the end is always present. He reminds us of a sad fact: the end of life is often faced alone. Both these characters, Sofie and Albert, bookend the human experience, and perhaps pessimistically, are alone. This concept of the beginning and ending became something of a theme in the film. A woman begins a pregnancy and a woman deals with the premature ending with a most important relationship, the one that exists with her mother. A man beginning his journey toward becoming a woman robs a man struggling to end his feelings for an ex-lover. The characters are weaved together, but not always tightly or uniformly. The connections had to be believable and a little surprising. And once the script was to a satisfying point, the collaboration with a cinematographer began.

Kevin Kilcher and I agreed that the story should be shot with a realistic feeling, so in many cases, opted to use a handheld camera. For that reason, we chose the lightweight Aaton A-minima camera. The film vs. video question was never present, as I had decided my first year that my thesis, if it was a narrative, would have to be shot in film. The film and the small camera, we decided, could provide an aesthetic that was both intimate and high quality. Patrice Chereau's film, "Intimacy" has such an

aesthetic, in which the viewer is in one way a voyeur watching some very intimate moments, but not as an intruder, but rather as one who has been invited to watch... and hopefully relate. "Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself," also captured extremely private moments, (suicide), without feeling intrusive or unnatural. I avoided the temptation to experiment with different effects, such as I had in my experimental two-quarter, "Simulacrum," because it was obvious that a film about the beauty and tragedy of everyday life must look natural. At the same time, it was important to Kevin and I that subtle variations exist from scene to scene. Because I thought of each scene as its own haiku within a collection of poems, I thought Kevin should be able to use light and movement to paint a picture to correspond with each poem.

It was Howard who first applied the word "haiku" to each of my scenes, during my thesis proposal. It was a perfect description of what I wanted to do with each short piece. They could stand alone, as quick but complete stories. Haikus often feel a bit unfinished, but it's not that they're unfinished; it's just that their endings are so soft that they don't feel like they should be over. They are so subtle that you have to think about it a minute before the profoundness hits you. It's stunning and

delicate at the same time. Therein laid my goal: to produce (approximately) one minute scenes that told a story efficiently and with density. I had to rely on the audience's ability to make connections and to infer without being spoon-fed information. For example, from one simple shot of a woman lying in bed, with only her foot visible, the viewer was to draw the conclusion that she was depressed. Of course, there was the context of the rest of this first scene: a young girl eating breakfast alone and getting herself dressed. It was still possible even within context that some ideas would be portrayed too subtly. Not only was there the challenge of relating an entire situation within each scene, but also sketching the connections between the scenes. The stories needed to be linked together without feeling contrived to be such. For that reason, some are much more connected than others, and some characters move to more settings than others. The "bookend" characters, which are the little girl and the old man, purposely don't leave their original settings. They represent the beginning and ending of life, and are thus stationary. They *cannot* move, just as birth and death are necessary, un-negotiable, unmovable parts of life. Between these bookends of childhood and old-age, I tried to include a variety of experiences that were universal enough that

the audience would be able to relate to at least one of the vignettes. Relying on the human experience, the goal was to forge relationships of shared emotions between characters and viewers.

The challenges of pregnancy and motherhood were always present, and I quickly realized that I had to work within the constraints of my circumstances. I feared this would compromise my artistic merit, there was an inherent belief that a filmmaker must never take an easy route and that the most difficult path was automatically the best path. But I ultimately dismissed that fear, and worked within my resources, and cast my daughter as the little girl. I cast my Grandfather as the old man, and I used my three-apartment home for many of the sets. The pregnant female character is none other than myself. It is often a great lament of student filmmakers, trying to find locations and actors. As I wrote my script, this was a consideration, and some decisions were made because, for example, my Mother owns an Antique shop. Why not set the scene where two old lovers unexpectedly run into each other there? Ultimately, because I allowed myself to do this, I got to focus on greater challenges, like bringing out the emotional content of a scene from my actors. In the majority of the scenes, I felt that the emotional content I

intended came through the actors rather effectively, but a couple of instances remain dissapointing to me. Toward the end of the film, Karen, a therapist, comes home from work to find that her partner, Dee, has made her dinner. Dee is very excited to see Karen, and has planned a special meal to announce that she's pregnant, even putting the positive pregnancy test on Karen's plate. Karen rushes in, a whirlwind, fired-up about a new patient that is opening her eyes to human nature, and she starts talking to Dee about it. Dee is crushed and Karen gets frustrated with her pouting; it is a common situation in relationships where two good intentions clash and a lack of intuition causes both people to feel alienated. As I watch the scene, the intensity that was intended in the script is replaced with a mild relationship altercation and a monologue that sounds very unnatural coming from the actress playing Karen. The shot with the pregnancy test on the plate was too short for many people to register, and some that did notice it have expressed disgust. Who knew that something I though was sort of romantic and sweet is actually revolting? Both actresses were first time, and it seemed that my direction could only take them so far. In retrospect, I should have searched longer and harder for more talent, and I blame myself for the scene falling flat.

In every production everywhere by every filmmaker, there are logistical or technical problems. It is deeply engrained in the nature of the art. "What Happened Thursday" was no exception. There was the bum DAT that sent my sound recorder speeding to RIT for a replacement while the rest of the crew froze in a parking garage. One night, a mysterious set of frequency disturbances followed us around the apartment and were only avoidable if the boom operator was lying on the floor. We had battery issues and one night my crew finished the last take of the last shot without me because I had to assuage a stretching navel with hot cloths. All in all, everything went very smoothly, however, and could only have been improved with more crew. At times, we were very bare-bones, but such is student filmmaking. In post-production, I had one scene with terrible camera noise. I used a combination of filters in Final Cut to alleviate it to the best of my ability, but I am still a bit disappointed in the sound quality of the scene, which was actually one of my favorite scenes. Overwhelmingly, the most poignant lesson learned is this: when working with young children, budget yourself for twice as much film and time than you might initially think you need. Especially when that young actress is the director's daughter.

The editing process was lengthy with this film, because although it was shot very closely to the script, there were still many creative decisions to be made. Keeping with the notion of variety between scenes, I edited some very realistically, while other scenes had a much more classical approach. For scene two, when Dee takes her pregnancy test, a stylistic decision was made to keep the camera in one spot and shoot the whole scene from that angle. To condense time, Dee's actions were edited together, while the room stayed still, giving the appearance of a sequence shot. She fades in and out of the room, sometimes just missing herself as she crosses it, sometimes walking right off screen, only to reappear seconds later. The aesthetic created by this type of editing really emphasizes the impatience one would experience while taking a pregnancy test.

"What happened Thursday" felt like a success, affirmed by the Faculty award at the Honors Show. I have not as of yet submitted it to any festivals, but intend to do so. In the year since completing the film, I have learned much that I could have used to improve the production value and perhaps my direction of the film, but I imagine with any art that is the case as the years go by. And I imagine that is a good thing.

Appendix A:

Proposal

The following is a story of, eleven characters, twelve hours, and thirteen human conditions. These scenes, meant to play out as their own short sketch on their particular circumstance, are interrelated through a series of connections and each character interacts and effects at least one other, and themselves represents a particular emotion.

10:00 am (*on the microwave clock*) Sofie, 4, sits at a table eating a large bowl of cereal. She peeks into her mother's room to see Jennifer lying in bed, crying. Sofie pulls an outfit out from her dresser and gets herself dressed, shoes and all. Ingenuity.

11:00 am Dee, in her pajamas and coat, walks into apartment carrying a plastic bag. She hangs up the coat and walks straight to the bathroom, opens up the pregnancy test she just bought, and takes it. (*by her watch*) While she waits, she feels her breasts, her stomach. She looks at her face closely in the mirror. It is positive. Anticipation.

Noon (*by the church bells*) Laura, dressed in sweatpants, a ratty sweatshirt, and a ski cap, pops two pieces of gum in her mouth and hops on her bike. She starts peddling, spits the gum onto her shoe, and tries to shake it off. She swerves from a tree, falling to the ground. A group of teenage cheerleaders walk toward her, giggling. Embarrassment.

1:00 pm Matt sits in a small white room, flipping through the pages of Penthouse magazine. Propping up a picture on a shelf, he inspects the small white container next to it, unzips his pants, and starts masturbating. (*by the clock on the wall*) A moment later, he is walking out of a building, putting some cash into his wallet. Lust.

2:00 pm (*by the alarm clock*) Bert sits in his assisted living home, in a wheelchair, staring out at the pond where a blue heron is fishing. A few moments of silence pass until Laura walks in, now dressed in a nursing outfit. She asks how he is today. Loneliness.

3:00 pm (*by the desk clock*) Karen, an executive, phones her secretary to be watching and ready to call security. Then enters Tim, a message courier, whom she fires, despite his pleas for his job. Desperation.

4:00 pm Matt is shopping at an Antique store, checking out an old clock, when he spots his ex-girlfriend, Sara, who avoids eye contact, though she's seen him too. He walks up to talk to her, and notices that she's pregnant. During their awkward small talk, Sara's husband walks over and introduces himself. He tells Sara that it's four, and that they should get going. Jealousy.

5:00 pm Charles walks out of a pharmacy with a prescription bag. Pulling out of the parking lot, he dials a number and waits until Jennifer answers. *(by the car radio)* She doesn't feel up to making dinner again, she tells him, and he offers to stop and get take-out at the usual Indian place. Worry.

6:00 pm *(by the kitchen stove)* Jude is cooking in the kitchen, when Sara and Laura walk in with shopping bags. Sara, pregnant, kisses him quickly and runs to the bathroom. Laura stays to chat with him, and she looks very attractive now that she's changed out of sweatpants. They start flirting, despite themselves. Sara returns and pretends to ignore what is obvious to her. Confusion.

7:00 pm Karen walks into her apartment and immediately starts complaining about work to her partner, Dee. Dee stops her with a gift bag, which Karen opens to find a baby outfit. Karen, ecstatic, suggests that they go out for dinner alone before they call their family. Joy.

8:00 pm *(by the hello kitty alarm clock)* Charles tucks Sofie into bed, and she asks what's wrong with Mommy. He explains that she's just really sad right now and wants to be alone. There's pain on Charles's face. Regret.

9:00 pm Matt is in a parking garage, about to get into his car, when Tim approaches him, flashing a knife and asking politely for his wallet. Matt starts running away, Tim chasing him close behind. He stops, shouting "wait," and gives Tim all his cash. Tim grabs it and runs away. Panic.

10:00 pm *(by the nightstand)* Bert dresses for bed with great difficulty, and sits himself down in front of the television. After a moment, his phone rings, and he is surprised. His hand reaches for the receiver.

Untitled Thesis - Director: Anastasia Cerankosky				
<i>Three weeks production time</i>		10-12 minutes running		5:1 ratio
Account	Quantity	Fee	Subtotal	Account Total
STORY AND SCRIPT	1	0	0	0
TALENT				
Actors	11	0	0	0
CREW				
Camera	3	0	0	0
Gaffers/Grip	3	0	0	0
PA		0	0	0
Still Photographer		0	0	0
Sound	1	0	0	0
TRAVEL AND LOCATIONS				
Meals	10 days	50	500	500
Location Fees	5 days	0	0	500
Petty Cash	10 days	10	100	600
Travel to Toronto	2 days	100	200	800
FILM STOCK				
Raw stock color	20 rolls (100 ft)	30	600	600
Developing	2000 ft	.20 / ft	400	1000
Transfer to Betacam	2000 ft	.34 / ft	680	1680
Transfer to Dvcam	2 30 min tapes	20/ tape	40	1720
SOUND				
Dat tape	3	5	15	15
Composer	1	0	0	15
OFFICE				
Shipping			100	100
Postage			50	150
Press Kits			100	250
Dubbing			100	350
Festival Fees			200	550
SUBTOTAL				3085
15 % CONTINGENCY				462.75
GRAND TOTAL				3547.75

Appendix B:

Script

Character Descriptions

Storyboard and Shot list examples

What Happened Thursday

by

Anastasia Cerankosky

SCENE ONE

INT. KERN'S KITCHEN — 10:00 am

The microwave clock turns from 9:59 to 10:00. SOFIE, 4, sits at a table, legs dangling, eating a bowl of Cheerios in her pajamas. Her head rests on her hand, propped up on her elbow, she looks a bit bored.

INT. KERN'S HALLWAY

Sofie sneaks toward a slightly ajar door and peeks in. She sees her mother, JENNIFER, laying facing away from her, crying. She backs away and continues down the hall.

INT. SOFIE'S BEDROOM

Sofie dresses herself, shoes and all. She hums to herself as she does this.

SCENE TWO

INT. DEE AND KAREN'S HALLWAY — 11:00 am

DEE, 28, walks into the hallway from outside and rips off her coat, revealing her pajamas beneath. She leaves the coat on the floor and heads straight to the bathroom, carrying a plastic pharmacy bag.

INT. DEE AND KAREN'S BATHROOM

Dee pulls a pregnancy test out of a box and doesn't glance at the directions. She sits on the toilet and puts the test between her legs. She checks her watch, it's 11:00 am, and then puts the test on the side of the sink. She looks at her face closely in the mirror, looks at her breasts, feeling them, and then rubs her hand over her lower abdomen.

SCENE THREE

INT. LAURA'S BATHROOM

The floor littered with plastic bags and the tools of a home hair dye kit. LAURA, 25, is blow-drying her blue-tipped tresses while she flips through a travel brochure to India. The phone rings, and she shuts the dryer off.

LAURA

Hello? Hi Momma, how are ya? *(pause)*
No, Ma, I told you already, I'm not coming
for dinner tonight, I'm eating with
friends. *(pause)* Ma, you know I'm not
married yet... *(pause)*... yeah, someday, huh?

Laura takes a deep breath and goes back to the mirror,
where she starts combing her hair. Her mother is
apparently still talking.

LAURA

Okay, I'll do it, but then I have to get
ready for work. I love you, Mom, I'll
see you tomorrow night. No, not tonight
Ma, tomorrow... okay?

She takes another breath and starts singing "Sittin' on the
Dock of the Bay."

SCENE FOUR

INT. SPERM DONATION ROOM

MATT, 26, sits on a stool in a humorously small white
room, flipping through the pages of a dirty magazine. He
appears to be mustering a feeling up, trying to get turned
on.

INT. MEDICAL HALLWAY

Matt walks up to the RECEPTIONIST, with the magazine
in hand.

MATT

Umm... excuse me, but do you have any
other magazines? I've already seen
this one.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, sir, we replace them once a
month. If you're going to come
more often than that, you may want
to bring your own materials?

INT. SPERM DONATION ROOM

Matt re-enters room. He decides on a picture, props it up on the same shelf that he removes a plastic cup from. He unzips his pants and starts to masturbate. His breath gets heavy as the clock clicks to 1:00pm.

EXT. SPERM DONATION OFFICE

Matt walks out of the building while putting some bills into his wallet.

SCENE FIVE

INT. BERT'S ROOM

BERT, 90, is sitting in his wheelchair, facing the window, watching the pond and the changing leaves outside. Laura enters the room after briefly knocking.

LAURA

Good morning Bert! Beautiful leaves out there, huh?

Bert doesn't respond. Laura pauses for a moment.

LAURA

Bert?

Bert raises his hand in a semi-wave. Laura turns on the television. She starts arranging medications on his kitchenette counter.

LAURA

That cooking show you love is coming on at two. And don't think I didn't notice that you're not wearing oxygen.

She looks at him, his back, and then out the window at his view. She walks toward him. He smiles to himself.

LAURA

You're meds are all set out with new needles.

Bert instinctively runs his hand over his bruised arm. She picks up the oxygen tube from the floor, hands it to him,

and turns on the machine. She leans over closer to his shoulder.

LAURA

I know you can hear me, Bert.

She starts walking out of the room.

LAURA

(over her shoulder)

You'll miss me when I'm in Tibet,
you know.

Bert waits for her to close the door before he fits the oxygen over his head and into his nose. He turns his wheelchair toward the television.

SCENE SIX

INT. KAREN'S OFFICE

In a pair of high heels and a skirt, TIM, 28, looks one hundred percent male. KAREN, 32, sits with him at a table in front of a file, her hand on his arm.

KAREN

You got out of bed this morning.
That's more than some people can
say. You're here... for help. That's
something.

Tim shifts in his chair, staring down at the file. He shrugs, shyly.

KAREN

To some degree, everyone faces
unresolvable conflicts. In some ways,
you're lucky, because you know what
you want.

TIM

Now I just need a lot of money.

They both laugh.

KAREN

Now, that's not my area of expertise.

But I'm sure you'll find a way. Where
there's a will...

Tim looks at her deeply, as if he's realizing something.

SCENE SEVEN

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP

Matt walks through the front door of the shop, a quiet place full of all kinds of antiques. He starts down an aisle and looks in the cases. He fixates on an old clock, but turns his head when he sees a couple pass out of the corner of his eye. He makes momentary eye contact with SARA, 26, who immediately looks away. Matt gets up, still looking in the direction where Sara was, his heart pounding. He looks back at the case for a moment, deciding what to do, and then walks in the direction Sara went. In the next aisle, Sara is paying attention to something in a case. Matt turns the corner of the aisle and walks over to her. Jude is at the opposite end of the aisle, inspecting a book.

MATT

Sara?

SARA

(feigning surprise)

Yes? Hey! Matt! Wow! How
are you doing?

MATT

I'm good! I just saw you, so
I thought I'd say hi. Are you?

Matt awkwardly gestures toward her swollen abdomen. Jude starts walking back toward them, and Sara swallows hard.

SARA

What? Pregnant? *(she laughs)* Um,
yeah, six months. Matt, this is my
husband, Jude.

Jude sticks his hand out to Matt, confidently shaking it, and not picking up on the tension between Sara and Matt.

JUDE

Matt?

Matt nods his head, pulling his hand away and into his pocket.

JUDE

Good to meet you.

MATT

Um, I thought — I didn't know
you were... congratulations. when
did you move back?

SARA

A while ago... I thought you
moved to New York to write.

MATT

(quickly)
I'm going to.

SARA

You should.

Jude, who'd started looking at another antique, stops and puts his arm around Sara.

JUDE

It's four, babe, don't you need
to meet Lo?

SARA

Yeah, I do. Matt, maybe I'll see
you again sometime.

JUDE

Good to meet you, man.

Sara pauses uncomfortably before her and Jude start away. Matt stands still, stunned.

SCENE EIGHT

CHARLES, 40, walks out of the hospital and gets into his car. Pulling out of the parking lot, he dials a number and waits until Jennifer answers. He seems to be in

a good mood, one that melts as soon as their conversation begins.

CHARLES

(into phone)

Honey? (pause) Oh, no, you don't sound very well. I got your scripts, don't worry. This is the latest and greatest, you'll be smiling in no time. (pause) Sorry. Do you want to make dinner together or do take out again? (pause) Yes, you are hungry — I'll stop at the Indian place. Tell Sofie I'll bring her some Nan. (frustrated) No, sweetheart, it's okay. Just, don't worry about it, okay?

The car radio says 5:00pm. Charles hangs up the phone and turns a corner, slamming on his breaks on laying on the horn and swearing as a car stops short in front of him.

SCENE NINE

INT. JUDE AND SARA'S KITCHEN

Jude stands over the stove, sautéing vegetables. Sara and Laura come in from outside, loaded with shopping bags. Sara heads straight over to him, grabbing his face in her hands.

SARA

Laura, would you look at this man?
This is the perfect man!

Laura smiles, faintly, completely agreeing. Sara kisses him and picks a vegetable out of the pan, blowing on it as she walks away.

JUDE

You grow my son, and I'll cook the dinner. Seems fair.

SARA

Mmm... this smells great. I have to pee.

As soon as she exits the kitchen, Laura slides into her place next to Jude at the stove.

LAURA
I'm starving... thanks for cooking.

Jude steps away and starts washing his hands.

JUDE
Sure. Hey, I like your hair. It looks really nice.

Laura brings him a towel and leans on the counter right next to him.

LAURA
Shut up, it looks like crap.

Jude splashes the excess water from his hands onto her face before she hands him the towel. She shrieks and hits him with it. Then she uses it to wipe her face off, so Jude wipes his hands on her arms.

JUDE
No, seriously, you look pretty.

LAURA
Thanks... *(wiping her arms off)*

They both laugh and then realize that Sara's standing in the doorway, observing. She forces a smile and starts pulling silverware out of a drawer.

SARA
When you kids are done playing,
how 'bout we set the table?

She walks out of the kitchen, hurt, and Jude glances guiltily at Laura before he grabs three plates and follows.

SCENE TEN

INT. DEE AND KAREN'S APARTMENT

Dee is putting the finishing touches on a table set for two: candles, flowers, and a plate with a positive pregnancy test on it. A door slams.

KAREN (OS)
Honey, I'm home!

Karen walks into the apartment, swiftly greets and kisses Dee before throwing her coat on the couch and lighting a cigarette. Dee remains in the kitchen, a bit stunned. Karen starts pacing, unaware of the romantic set-up. Dee is busy getting dinner on the table.

KAREN
You know, Dee, I'm amazed by my clients everyday. *(pause to take a drag)*. Did I tell you about the tranny yet?

DEE
Umm, I think so. Are you hungry?

KAREN
I think everyone has a dream they need to follow... even if the dream is just to fix what's wrong in their life. *(taking out her cell)* Sharon wanted to know if we want to meet up with everyone tonight for a drink or whatever...

Karen walks through the kitchen with the phone to her ear. Dee glances at the table and then extinguishes the cigarette Karen has left in the ashtray. Karen re-enters the room and picks up the cigarette. Dee is putting food on the table.

KAREN
I left a message. Dee — did you put this
out
or am I nuts?

DEE
Sorry. I made dinner, aren't you hungry?

KAREN
Oh babe, I had a huge late lunch. Would you hate me if I just wanted to take a bath and relax before we go out?

DEE
I don't really want to go.

KAREN
Dee, please don't. I had a really stressful day.

She takes a moment and looks at Dee, whose face is full of hurt. She kisses her forehead and heads to the bathroom.

KAREN
Fine. Do what you want.

Dee walks over to the table, blows out the candles, but leaves the test on the plate. She grabs a pot full of something with a wooden spoon in it, and head for the couch with it.

SCENE ELEVEN

INT. SOFIE'S BEDROOM

Sofie lies in bed as Charles sets her alarm clock. The time is 8:00 pm.

CHARLES
There we go, sweetness. Tomorrow we've got to be up by seven for school. Now, what do we want for a story tonight? Angelina Ballerina?

Sofie shakes her head. Charles scans the bookshelves.

CHARLES
All right... let's see what else we've got here.

SOFIE
Daddy, why is Mommy so sad?

Charles puts back the book he was checking out and goes to sit on Sofie's bed.

CHARLES
Well, tootsie, Mommy has a kind of illness that makes her so sad.

SOFIE

You're a doctor, Daddy.

Charles swallows hard, pain welling up into his face.

CHARLES

Yes, I know, baby. I'm trying to help Mommy get better. But... its not an easy sick to get rid of, babe. She's going to be okay, though, you don't need to worry about that. You shouldn't have to worry about that, little girl. Okay?

Sofie nods her head, uncomforted. Charles tucks her in and kisses her forehead before he heads to the door, turns off the light. He speaks into the darkness.

CHARLES

Sofie, I love you and Mommy loves you too. (pause) I'm sorry, baby.

He closes the door.

SCENE TWELVE

Matt is walking through a parking garage, carrying a grocery bag. Tim follows him a few steps behind a minute before speaking.

TIM

Hey!

Matt turns around, surprised but not shaken.

MATT

I don't have any change, man.

TIM

Hey! Stop. Come here.

Tim flashes a knife from his pocket. Matt freezes.

TIM

Look, I need your wallet.
Please.

Matt turns away and starts walking away quickly. As Tim follows, he breaks into a run for a few yards, dropping his grocery bag. Then, suddenly, he stops, puts his arms up and turns around.

MATT

Wait! Wait! Dude... hold on.

Tim stops, as awkward as can be, and waits. Matt pulls his wallet out of his pocket and throws it at Tim. It lands open, revealing a picture of Sara. Tim, still aiming the knife at Matt, picks it up cautiously. Matt, noticing the picture, steps forward.

MATT

Hey, can you just take the cash?
There's a hundred dollars.. I
need the wallet.

Tim, confused, nods and holds the knife down while he pulls out the bills and starts to hand the wallet back to Matt.

MATT

Okay, put the fucking knife away,
okay, man?

Tim puts this knife in his pocket. He decides to throw the wallet back.

TIM

Thanks... I - I'm sorry.

He turns and hurries away. Matt dusts off the picture, and puts his wallet in his pocket, and starts back to his car.

SCENE THIRTEEN

INT. BERT'S ROOM

Bert dresses for bed with great difficulty but a certain sense of dignity. He is subconsciously humming to himself. He sits himself down in the wheelchair, and puts on the television. After a moment, the phone of his clock radio rings, and he is surprised. His hand reaches for the receiver.

Character Descriptions

CHARACTER PROFILE: SOFIE, 4

Sofie is blonde and blue-eyed, intelligent and adorable. She was conceived in an attempt to revive her mother's outlook on life. She's forced to be extremely independent because her mother, Jennifer, is clinically and chronically depressed. Most mornings for Sofie start with her kitten waking her up, and then her feeding the kitten before she gets herself a bowl of cereal. Sometimes she watches cartoons while she eats; other times she just sits quietly. She loves the beautiful clothes her mother buys her on rare manic days that result in indulgent shopping sprees.

CHARACTER PROFILE: JENNIFER, 38

On good days, Jennifer spends her husband's money, showering her daughter, Sofie, with expensive clothes and toys. She spends time at the spa and gets her roots covered. Once a freelance writer for various glamour/fashion magazines, Jennifer no longer feels the financial need to work, and has resigned herself to her lovely home. Not that she's satisfied with her lifestyle, what so ever, she spends a lot of time sleeping and taking baths. When she feels down, her daughter holds little interest for her, representing yet another project she started and then got sick of, much like her marriage and her career.

CHARACTER PROFILE: CHARLES, 40

Charles is a successful surgeon who cares for his depressed wife and young daughter as well as his patients. He loves his family dearly, but feels that he has lost the battle with his wife, Jennifer's, depression and can at best keep her comfortable, fed, and medicated. Jennifer is his second wife. He also has a grown daughter, 18, who lives across the country with his ex-wife and the man she left him for. Graduating with top honors from medical school, he is now a top-notch surgeon who travels once a year to South America to perform free reconstructive surgery on children with facial deformities.

CHARACTER PROFILE: DEE, 28

Dee realized she was a lesbian after she had her first orgasm making out with her college roommate. Her liberal parents accepted her willingly and have always encouraged

her happiness. After law school, Dee began practicing environmental law. She met Karen when Karen's former employer was involved in a suit concerning soil pollution. They fell in love, and after Karen left the environmentally un-friendly company, she doubled her salary at another. Three years ago, they were joined by their parents, friends, and coworkers for a very expensive union celebration at the hottest restaraunt in town. Dee wore a simple Caroline Kennedy type gown and her hair in flowers. They travel often, dine out at least four nights a week, usually with a group of friends, and live in a small but posh apartment. She called in sick today after waking up extremely nauseous, which gives her hope that the artificial insemination she received last month will work to give her and Karen the hope for.

CHARACTER PROFILE: KAREN, 32

Karen grew up with her much older father after her mother was killed in a car crash when Karen was seven. Her slightly eccentric child psychology professor father realized that she was gay before Karen knew what sex was. His acceptance of her sexuality and everything Karen did gave her an enormous sense of confidence that sometimes bleeds over the border to arrogance. She attended college and business school, where she had many girlfriends, but no one serious until she met Dee. Karen's father is now in a home for the elderly, and she finds it extremely difficult to see the once brilliant and vivacious man now struggling with the simplest tasks. She deals with this by keeping him in the best care she can afford with her wealth, and visiting him seldom. Her generous care almost balances out her guilt.

CHARACTER PROFILE: LAURA, 25

A nurse at a posh assisted living community, but she spends most of her free time playing guitar, watching movies, and planning trips on the internet that she wants to take. She aspires to join the Peace Corps, so she's taking medical courses at a local college in hopes to increase her chances of acceptance. She spends at least one night a week with her best friend, Sara, and her husband Jude. She's always had a little crush on Jude, which intensified painfully during a drunken game of spin the bottle at Jude and Sara's last year that resulted in PG-13 rated orgy.

CHARACTER PROFILE: JUDE, 30

Jude is an extremely intelligent, business savvy café owner who has fashioned himself a very comfortable life by investing wisely and utilizing his innate business sense. Sara enamored him in a way no other women had before and he married her without any fear of commitment. The way they'd been drawn to each other immediately and fell in love so hard had surprised both of them, but it seemed that they were simply meant to be. They laughed a lot together, and hosted many parties with their friends. It turned him on that his wife would suggest a game of spin the bottle or suggestively dance with other women. At the same time he felt 100% secure in their relationship, and knew that she did too. Now that Sara is pregnant, however, Jude feels nervous that they're active lifestyle will turn dull. He's excited to become a father, but isn't entirely comfortable with his wife's once simply sexy body becoming a vessel for another human to develop in. The idea frankly freaks him out, and it makes sex difficult for him, not being able to shake the fear that he's hurting her or the baby.

CHARACTER PROFILE: MATT, 26

Matt is a man who doesn't want to be any older than 21. He's a photojournalist who makes money on the side by donating sperm. He saves his money obsessively, hoping to travel around the world, building up a National Geographic-worthy portfolio. He hasn't had a serious girlfriend since his college fiancé, Sara, broke his heart. He is rational and strong-willed, but at the same time humble and quiet. He collects antique clocks and goes to the movies, usually alone. He lives next to a bar, where he usually ends his nights.

CHARACTER PROFILE: BERT, 90

Bert lived an amazing life: a child music prodigy, a private in the army, a child psychology professor, and a father. He is well respected by everyone who knows him. None of it matters, now, though. He is living in a very comfortable but very isolated assisted living residence, and the daughter who adored him visits on holidays and the occasional Sunday. He is wiser than to think his life has been a waste, but is human enough to feel lonely. He keeps himself informed by watching television, and when he has

the energy, he writes his memoirs. His eyesight has started to degrade dramatically, however, and now he finds himself facing the last days of his life, trying to be dignified and brave.

Shot List and Storyboard Examples

SHOT LIST**SHOOT ONE****WED., OCT. 20th, 2004**SCENE ONE

A. MASTER: WS – Whole dining room. Sofie eats cereal and exits. HIGH HAT.

B. MS – Same as shot 1. TRIPOD.

C. CU – Legs dangling under table. HIGH HAT.

D. CU – Face staring. HAND HELD.

E. ECU – Mouth chewing. HAND HELD.

=====

F. CU – Clock, it is 10:00 AM.

=====

G. MASTER: MS – Sofie walks out of dining room and into hall, opens door, looks into bedroom (camera moves to become her POV), closes door and goes up stairs. HAND HELD.

H. POV – Mom on bed. TRIPOD.

I. MCU – Sofie's feet on tiptoes. HIGH HAT.

J. CU – Hand on doorknob. TRIPOD.

=====

K. MASTER: MWS – Sofie enters and begins getting dressed. TRIPOD.

L. CU – Getting clothes out. HAND HELD.

M. CU – Pulling shirt over her head. HAND HELD.

N. CU – Buttoning pants. HAND HELD.

O. CU – Pulling shoes on. HAND HELD.

P. CU – Buttoning sweater. TRIPOD

NOTE: All shots are supposed to imply Sofie's experience and are there for NEVER higher than her eye level.

SHOT LIST**SHOOT ONE****WED., OCT. 20th, 2004****SCENE THREE**

- A. CU — Following trail of hair dye supplies on floor, follow up to Laura and her reflection.
- B. MASTER: WS — Bathroom, Laura in mirror.
- C. OTS MS — Laura's reflection, tilt down to national geographic, pan to phone ringing.
- D. CU — Hand picks up phone and puts it to mouth.
- E. MCU — Following Laura as she paces.
- F. MS — Laura is sitting on the side of the tub painting her toenails.

NOTE: The tone is frustrated but not hectic, she is patiently frustrated.

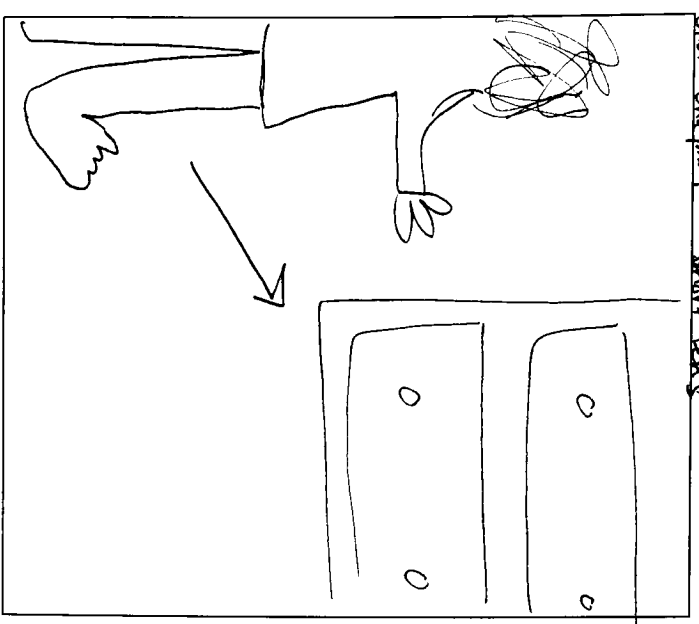
Scene One, Hallway

- 1.AA Wide-angle MASTER from stairs. Sofie comes into hallway opens door, looks into room and walks up the stairs past the camera. **H**
- 2.BB POV of bedroom. **T**
- 3.CC CU of Sofie's feet through motion. **High Hat**
- 4.DD CU of Sofie's hand on doorknob. **H**

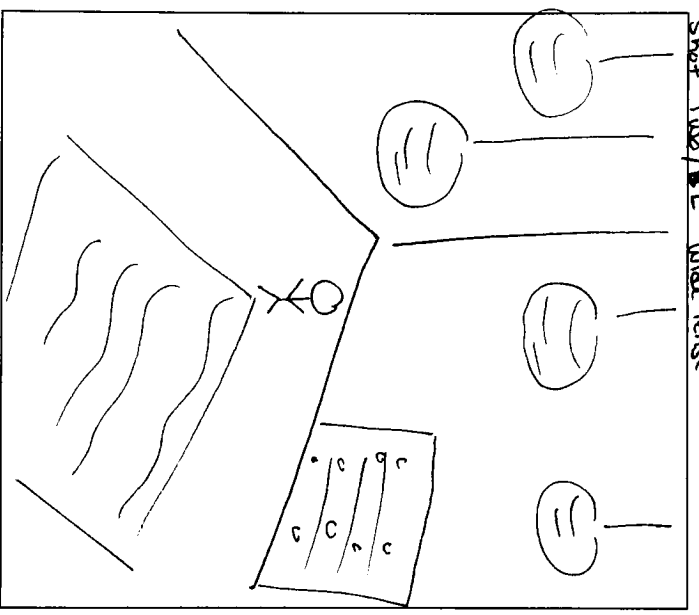
Scene One, Sofie's Bedroom

- 1.L. Down-angle, wide **MASTER**. Sofie's room, she walks in, pulls out clothes and starts getting dressed. 2 shots? **T**
- 1.N. Down-angle, wide. Sofie walks into frame with doll, sits-down cross-legged. Plays with doll. **High Hat on Ladder**.
- 1.K. MCU locked-down of dresser. Sofie walks in, frame left, opens drawers, pulls out clothes. Roll intermittently through Sofie getting dressed. **T**
- 1.M. ECU, long-lens, still buttoning up shirt, tilt-up with her hands. **T**
- 1.M. 2-6 CU/ECU montage, long lens, documentary style/set up. **H**

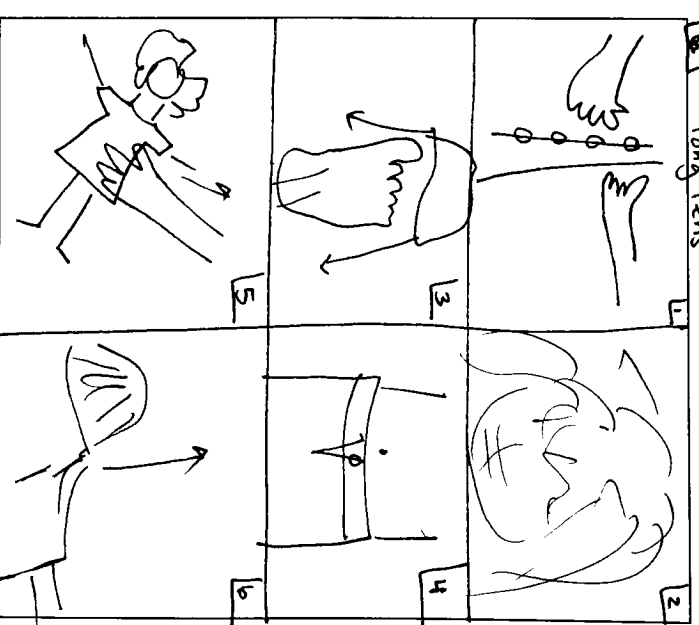
Shot One/1K Short lens



Shot Two/8L short/wide lense



Shot Three/long lense



* these are not in edited order.

MCU dresser, Sofie walks into

high, wide angle looking

ECU/ CU montage: ① still buttoning up shirt,

down as she starts getting

ECU, tilt up with that, ② H-H ECU

dressed. * master - show her

head looking down, H-H pulling sock ③

walking in to dresser, too,

an. ④ H-H buttoning pants ⑤ H-H

from this angle. Sound: Sofie humming.

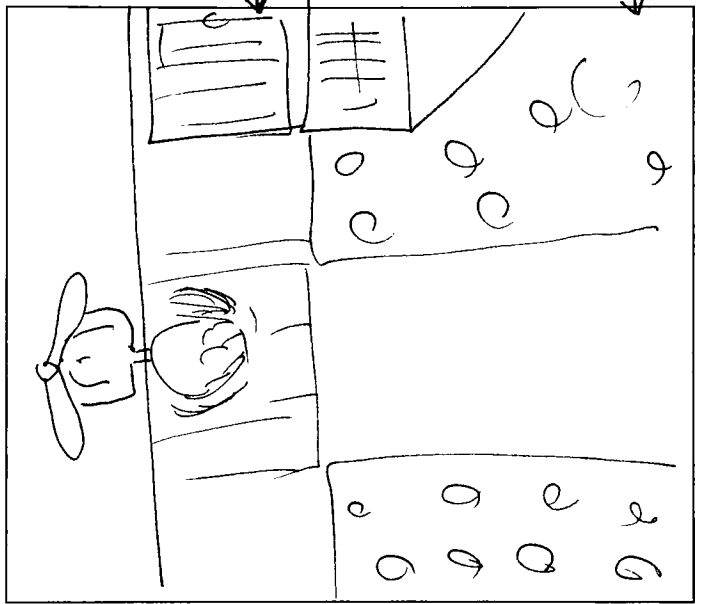
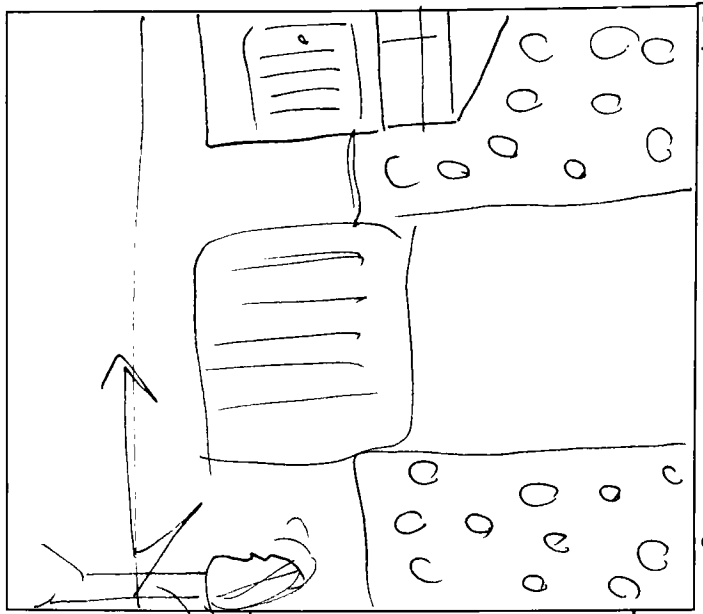
picking up doll on floor, ⑥ H-H head cam

through shirt.

Sound: Sofie humming

* shallow depth-of-field

high angle ↓ Down



WS

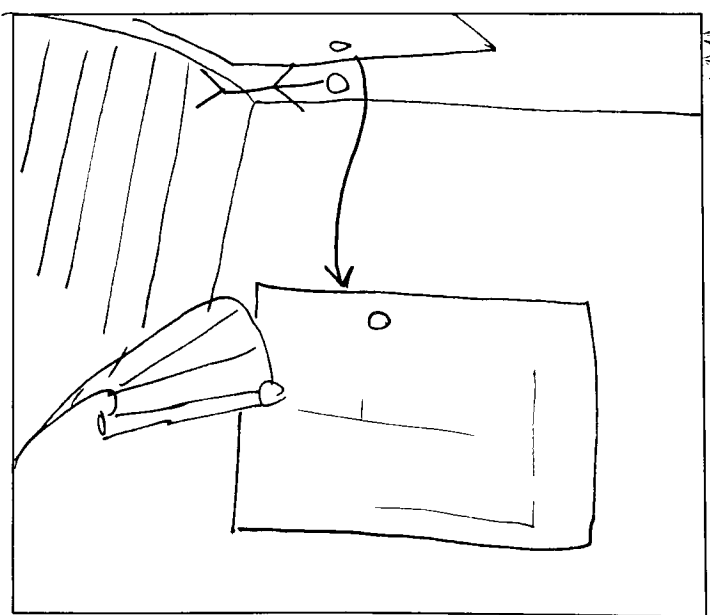
Sofie walks into skill

ame and sits down,

ss - legged, playing with her

1: Sofie humming

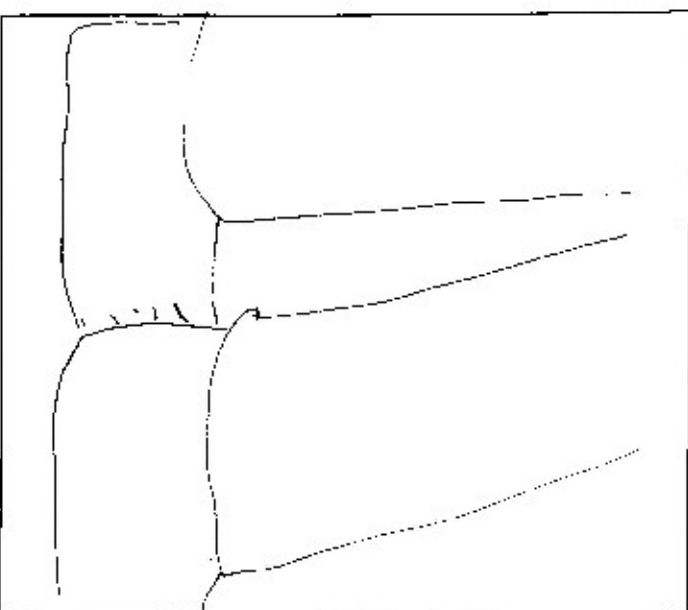
1A



Wide Ang MASTER FROM

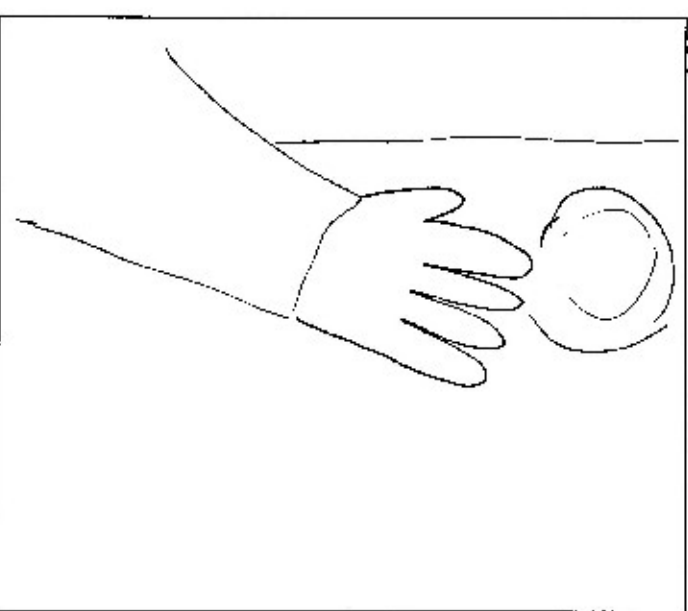
STAIRS

ICC



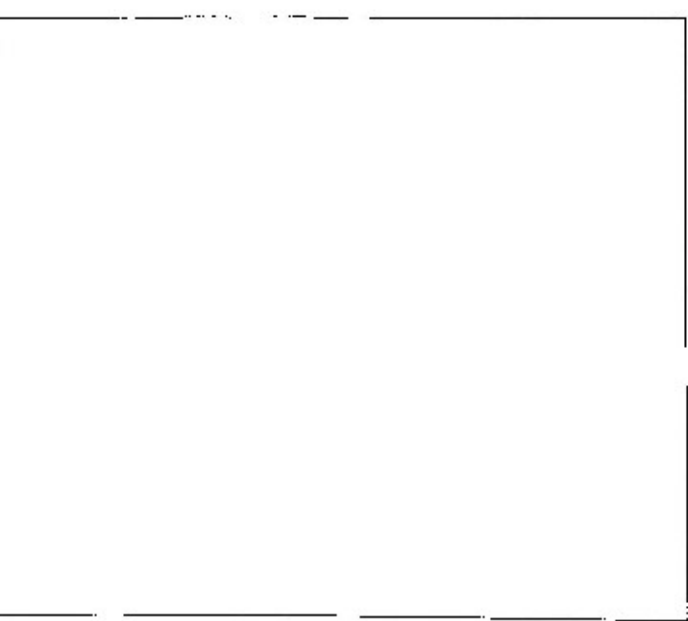
ICU Following Sofie's feet

IPD



CU Sofie's hand reaches for the

door knob



shot list

shoot four

12.01.04

scene 12

12A WS master. Tim _ visible in screen as elevator door opens. Matt exits, walks into focus, then we follow until "Hey! Stop. Come here!" Matt turns, rack to Tim.

12C CU knife at hip. MOS

12D Reverse of 12B. "Wait!" to end of scene

12B OS/MS of Matt. "I don't have any money." To "Wait! Dude, hold on!" Dolly/Walk forward during short chase.

12F same as 12B, but tighter on Matt. "Hey, can you just take the cash" to "Okay, put the knife away."

12E CU of wallet lying open on the ground, picture of Sara visible. MOS

12G MS profile as Matt picks up wallet, dusts it off, and heads to his car, picking up groceries on the way. Pan/move with him.

FILM: 11, 12, 13

Director: Anastasia Cerankosky
Cinematographer: Kevin Kilcher

Shoot #: 13

Day: Sunday Date: 04.10.05

Call Time: 3:00 pm

Wrap Time: ?

Dinner: 7:00 pm

Crew Call Location: 16 Gibbs Street (Java's)
Shooting Location: basement floor, Java's cafe

Crew

CREW POSITION	NAME	PHONE
Cinematographer	Kevin Kilcher	748-6619
Assistant Camera	Michael Barakat	412-335-4474
Gaffer	Cat Angst	
Production Assistant	George Velesko	(518) 256-7732
Sound Recorder	Charles Cerankosky	752-2673
Director	Anastasia Cerankosky	752-2685
Boom	Jennifer Mahoney	705-0137

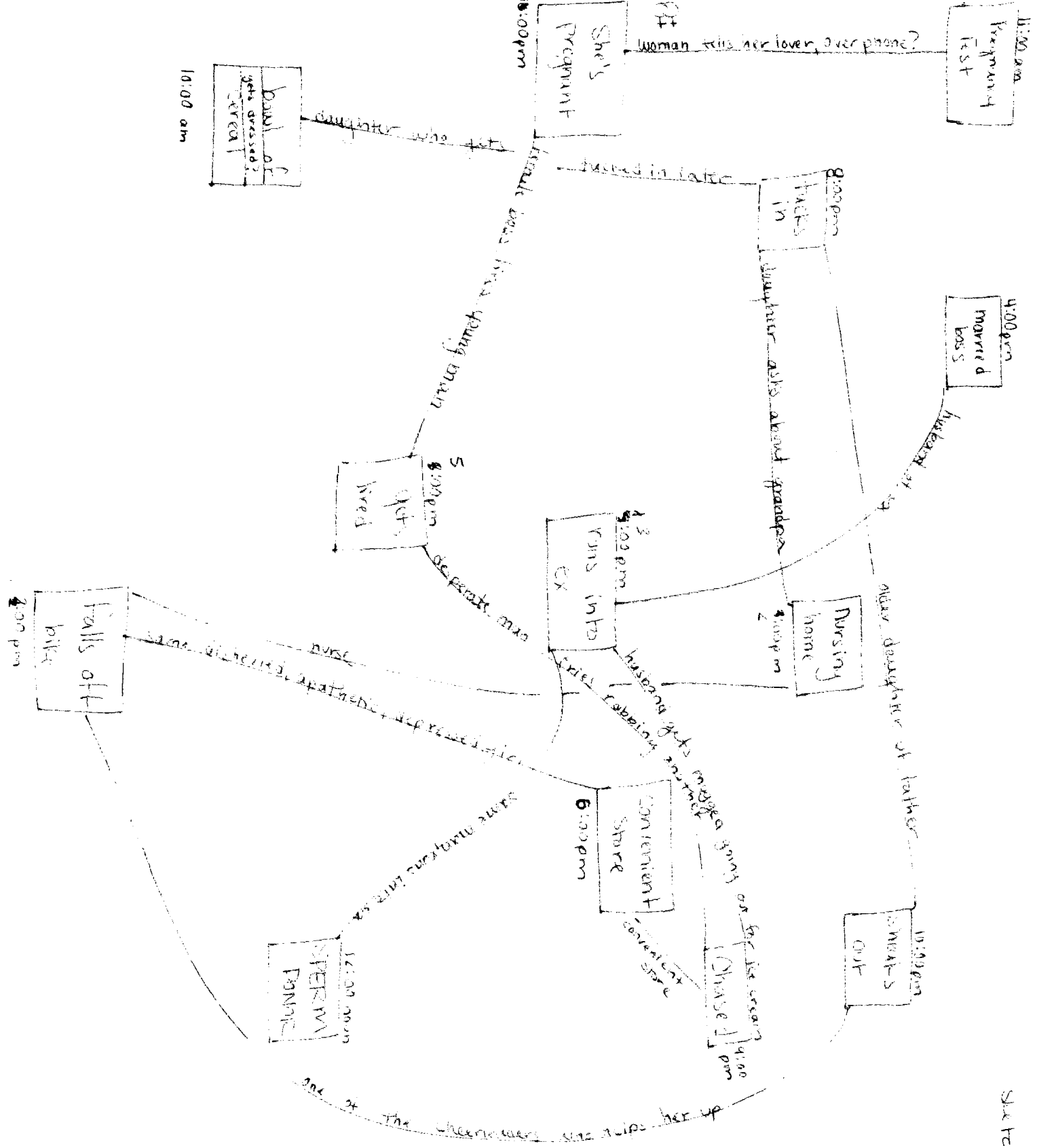
Talent

CHARACTER	NAME	PHONE
Dee	Denyse Meier	746-4398

Appendix C:

Stills

Sketch. 71.







" "